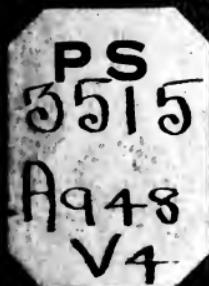


# VERSE AND WORSE



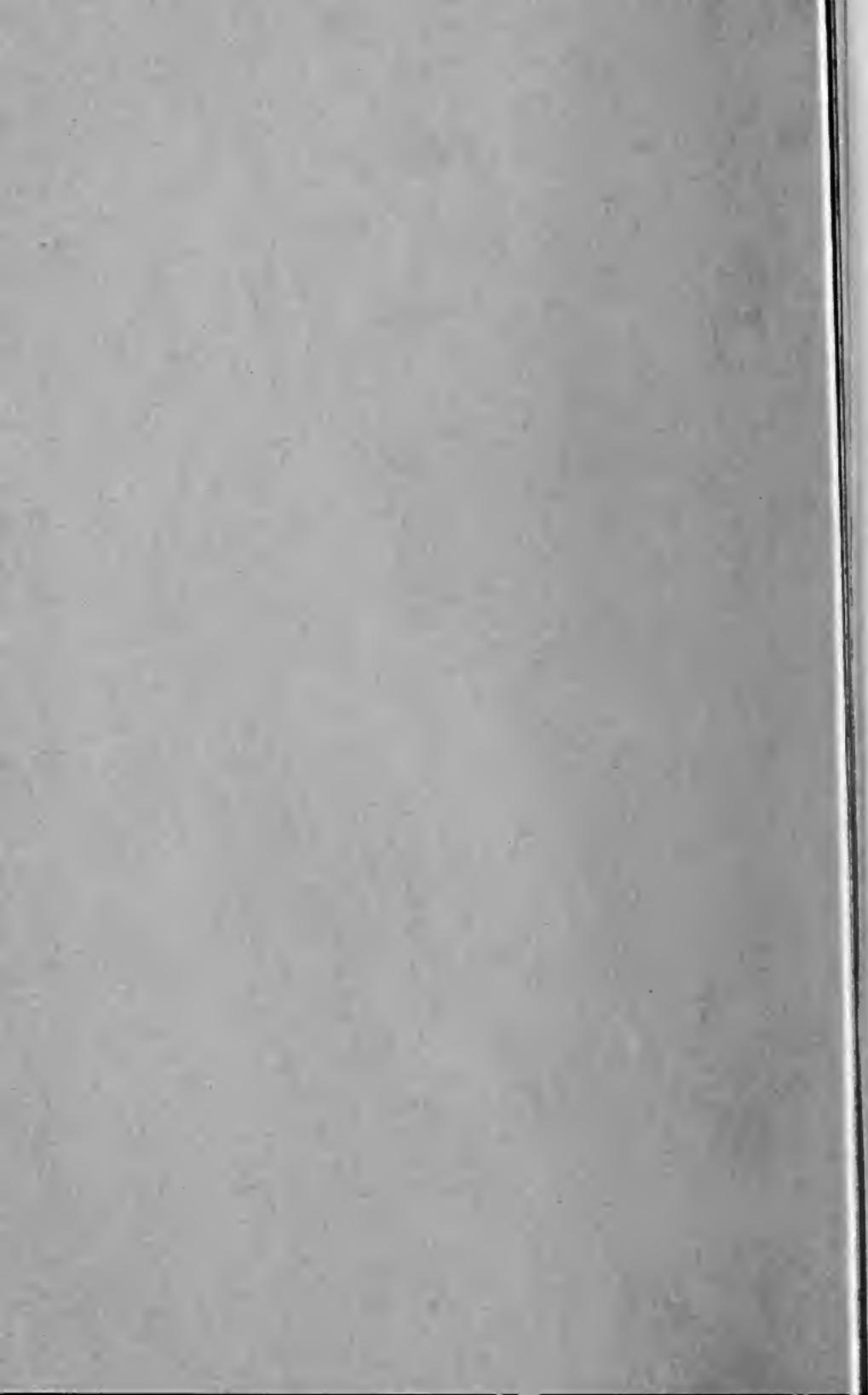
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# VERSE AND WORSE



NORAH LEE HAYMOND

# VERSE AND WORSE

BY

NORAH LEE HAYMOND



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By conforming to meter and form, poems of passion lose their fire and strength and become meaningless words.

# **JUST AS I AM**

*Dedicated to myself*

I'M not pretty nor ugly, I'm just sort  
of plain,

An every day sort of girl.

I love music, a good book, some quiet  
life,

Yet a little of society's whirl.

I talk some, play better, and dance  
With some show of grace.

So I think I'm just unpopular because  
Of my plain little sallow face.

I do everything I ever heard of  
That a girl's supposed to do,  
Drive, ride, swim, skate,  
In sports I excel, it's true.

My friends all say I'm clever  
When they read my jingles and  
rhymes,  
My verses and songs and stories  
Of love and adventures and crimes.

They say, "I wish I could dance like  
you."

And, "It's wonderful the way you  
play."

Then they walk away to their tea or  
dinner

And leave me alone all day.

And I sit by my fire alone,  
And think and dream and plan  
For the day when some one will come  
along

To take me just as I am.

There isn't a soul I know of—  
From the end of the Earth to the  
end—  
In whose heart I hold first place.  
I'm just an acquaintance,—a friend.

Yet I'm starving for love and atten-  
tion,  
Starving for some one to care,  
Starving for just some small part  
In the gay life out there.

I'm a woman in mind and body,  
And with the passion that's in my  
soul,  
The love and companionship I'd give  
a man  
Can neither be bought nor sold.

But I'm an after-thought, just an  
after-thought.  
Isn't that sad to you?  
To be thought of just when every  
one else  
Has been thought of ahead of you?

## WITH THE DUSK

*Dedicated to Billie*

YOU come to me always with the  
dusk,

That's why I love it so;

When the shadows lengthen, and the  
day has gone

Where all the days must go,—

Into the making of a past,

That each one of us must own;

And some are good while some are  
bad

With sins for which to atone.

Now you and I, we've sinned and  
sinned—

In the eyes of all the folks,

Because we've given each other of  
love

Nor saddled ourselves with yokes.

It's really amusing to try to figure

What the world calls wrong, or right,

In the giving and taking of the treas-  
ures of love,

In the darkness, in the light.

Wrong unless fetters of iron-bound  
law

Hold Cupid hard and fast,  
And thus must two who really hate  
Cling together until the last.

Now for instance, there's you and I,  
They say we've done wrong, dear,  
Because there's no fetter outside of  
my love

To bring and hold you here.

Yet, with the dusk you always come,  
And I am always waiting.  
There couldn't be in this whole world  
A happier, more perfect mating.  
And if our lot be atonement for sin  
In the shaking of life's dice—  
Having known your love, makes it  
well worth while.  
I am willing to pay the price.



## A RHAPSODY

*To P. L. F.*

YOU go to my head like wine,

You wonderful, wonderful girl.

One tiny kiss from your passionate  
lips

Sets my every sense a-whirl.

The touch of your hands against  
mine,

Is so maddeningly, poignantly sweet,

That insane with adoration,

I kiss your dear little feet.

I should die if you were unyielding,  
Or even passive cold.

But you answer my caresses  
With a wealth of passion untold.

I don't believe that Heaven—  
Knows a greater bliss than this,  
Just holding you always in my arms  
And feeling you thrill with my kiss.

## LOVE'S DEATH

*Dedicated to A. B. S.*

WINTER and cold bleak darkness,  
Shadows everywhere,  
The whistling, roaring winds are  
screaming,

Death is in the air.

Like a poisonous serpent it creeps  
along,  
Ready with deadly bite,  
To destroy all things too weak and  
frail,  
To combat its fatal might.

The little brown and curled-up leaves  
That rustle around my feet  
Are dead, and they carry death's dry,  
dull song,  
With them along the street.

The naked limbs of all the trees—  
Are writhing with the cold,  
But they have died that they may live  
again  
New glories to unfold.

Each delicate, lovely, little flower,  
Tinted and scented today,  
Is gone to-morrow forever,  
It's beauty withered and grey.

And so it is with my poor soul,  
The icy hand of death—  
Is clutching and clawing, trying to  
    destroy  
The little life that's left.

'Tis the icy hand of a selfish love  
That took all and gave no return,  
That's clutching and clawing at my  
    heart  
With fingers that freeze and burn.

I'll always look on the beauties of  
Spring

With pity in my eye,  
Knowing that Winter will claim them  
all

They must give up their beauty and  
die.

And the very Sun that's wooed them  
And kissed them in the Spring,  
Looks on in coldness when the wintry  
winds

Their death song begins to sing.

And love—like Winter,  
With its scorching breath,  
After taking and tiring  
To the heart brings death.



## TWO SUITORS

I AM a woman, fair to behold,  
Two suitors have come to me;  
One is rich, in measures of gold,  
While the other is poor you see.

They each want my future,  
To have and to hold forever and a  
day;  
Now, the question arises, which shall  
I wed—  
Which shall I send away?

The one who is rich in measures of  
gold,

Is old, and feeble, and ill,

In yielding to him, my body is sold  
For comfort and ease, without thrill.

I'd have my own car, and castles and  
gems,

Everything money can buy.

But whenever I think of the touch of  
him,

I always shiver and sigh.

My other suitor, the one who is poor,  
As the world counts, in measures of  
gold,  
Is rich in the priceless possession of  
youth,  
With health and strength untold.

My heart goes out to him who is  
young,  
For youth will call to youth,  
I have weighed them and found riches  
wanting,  
I shall marry for love, and truth.

## LOST

HAVE you ever stopped to ponder,  
    Stopped to think—stopped to  
        wonder  
At the devilish fascination of the  
    flesh—  
When you feel your arms are holding  
Softly closing—close, enfolding, to  
    your heart  
        Her form of dainty grace?  
You think not then of the why nor  
    wherfore  
Of passion, and its all-consuming fire.  
You only know you hold the flesh that  
    Answers your desire.

There is no thought of morrow 'till the  
dawn begins to spread

And peeping thro' the drawn shade  
lights her dusky head.

Why does sadness linger where such  
bliss has been,

Does conscience always taunt one  
with its endless noisy din ?

Or, are there other Gypsy souls as  
free from care as I—

Who give, and take to the utmost  
dregs, and all the laws defy ?

Why turn away from passion, why let  
it pass you by—

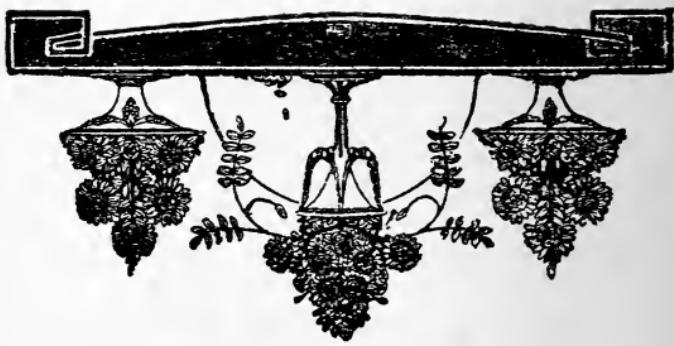
Always in the future with keen regret  
to sigh?

Why miss the thrill—the madness—  
of that wondrous, throbbing  
pain,

That thru endless years of yielding  
may not be yours again?

Take what life will give, weighing  
neither time nor cost—

Lest—thru anticipation—'tis forever  
—lost.



## WILL YOU REMEMBER

I CANNOT forget that one scarlet  
kiss—

My lips were burning slaves of pas-  
sion,

Yours, passive cold.

Do you remember?

It was at parting that it came, by  
you all unsought—

But, ah, it was in answer to my pray-  
er for touch of you.

Can you remember?  
You would have passed me by,  
Little dreaming that the watching  
fates  
Would make you yield to my desire.  
You bent and placed upon my lips  
That one scarlet kiss (I cannot for-  
get).  
Were you conscious of the touch of  
my lips on your mouth?  
Will you remember?

## TOO LATE

TWO big, wonderful eyes of brown,  
Untouched as yet by love;  
But wide-open, frank, the gaze of a  
child,  
Or is it the angels above?

I stand apart, just two eyes of blue,  
Longing to come nearer;  
To look long and deep in those wells  
of truth,  
Ah, nothing could be dearer.

To look long and deep, to call to life  
The passion I know they're masking;  
To see them answer my call of love,  
To know all were mine for the asking.

I wonder—who will be the first,  
To awaken that wonderful gleam,  
To lift the veil of innocence,  
To teach them to live, to dream.

To see that first wild startled look  
At the first clear call of their mate;  
To see the tender after-glow  
As they falter and hesitate.

Oh, I wish it were these eyes of blue  
Could do this wonderful thing;  
But they are young, on the threshold  
    of life  
While I'm old, and I've had my fling.

## DEAR ONE

DEAR ONE, the purple night draws  
nigh,

The shadows lengthen even as I sigh,  
Do you remember, do you recall,  
How I always came to you for love's  
sweet cheer,

When night brought its secret dread,  
its hidden sighs and tears?

I seem to see your dear blue eyes,  
And hear your laughing voice,  
As you hold me close and drive away  
    my fears;  
But I am all alone, fearing the night,  
    Dear One,  
For you've forgotten—  
Oh, come to me across the purple  
    night and leave me never-  
more,  
And leave me nevermore, Dear One.

## DESPAIR

*Dedicated to a woman of the streets  
I once knew*

THE night is here, the dark, dark  
night,

With all its shadows drear.

Alone, I lie upon my silken couch, un-  
loved, unsought—

Yet, for one single word of love, could  
my whole soul be bought.

I've sold my body o'er and o'er  
To men who didn't care,

They've wanted only passion,  
Not life's more precious ware.

Not one of them has ever tried  
My heart or soul to find,  
They seem to think there is no soul  
In a woman of my kind.  
They think I'm just a toy,  
A thing made to amuse,  
Or in their drunken passions  
To annoy and abuse.

Like a common slave,  
I've been bought and sold;  
To each man's pleasure  
For jewels and gold.  
I've drunk to the dregs of sordidness  
From passion's tinsel flask—  
With not one real love in my whole  
life  
As sunshine in which to bask.

There may be those who envy me  
My jewels and earthly joy—  
But I'd give them all for the love of  
    a man  
And the right to a baby boy.  
To be the wife of one good man  
Who'd love me alone, no other—  
To know the touch of baby hands  
And voices calling me "mother."

But I sigh and sigh in vain,  
For no one beneath the Sun,  
Doth ask for my heart, my soul, my  
love—

It's mere pleasure they want, and fun.  
I've stolen away here all alone  
The rest of my earthly days—  
I'll spend in prayer and penitence,  
For my past and it's wicked ways.  
Maybe in the other world to come  
My soul-mate I shall meet,  
I purge my soul of its wickedness,  
It shall be clean to lay at his feet.

## I KISS YOU

I KISS your hair, each golden strand  
A thrill unto my inmost soul  
doth send.

I kiss your eyes, their glance so pure  
Doth call anew and fresh enchant-  
ment lend.

I kiss your rosy palms, your dainty  
finger tips each one;  
And then upon your lips, twin, scar-  
let poppy buds—

At last I kiss you, ah, I kiss you.

## FAREWELL

LEAVE me all alone to die, a weary  
Lotus eater I  
Upon this Isle.

As the crimson poppy sleeps, o'er my  
soul this langour creeps,  
I crave rest.

Weary of life's dreary pace, I rest at  
last—

While memories flock my endless  
dreams to grace.

I lie here day by day alone, where the  
Lotus dust is blown.

The kindly winds will soothe my soul,  
and then the price of death  
extol.

Around my neck I feel your arms, but  
your lovely earthly charms  
Cannot undo what Fate has done, the  
Lotus bud its work's begun.  
While I answer your desire, this crav-  
ing which is scorching fire,  
Consumes me.

On my bed of Asphodel, I'm sinking  
slowly into Hell,  
Farewell.

## REDEMPTION

ALTHO' I've said to you, "farewell,  
Through sin I go to death."

In penitence I cry aloud  
With each faint, gasping breath.

For my sinful weakness,  
Now I must atone.  
I go to Purgatory—  
To suffer there alone.

In cleanliness my soul shall soar—  
The day of my release,  
To meet you, in the promised land  
Of Celestial love and Peace.

## THE MISTRESS

*Dedicated with respect to B. Y.*

I'M only his mistress—  
That despicable thing  
That all good women  
Call low and mean.

I have no soul,  
In good folks' eyes,  
I'm only made  
To fear and despise.

While his wife's in her mansion  
Glittering and bright,  
Entertaining, carousing,  
All thru' the night.

I'm alone in my cosy little nest,  
Thinking of all he loves the best.  
And I try, when he comes in at night,  
To have everything comfy and just all  
right.

And if his step is slow and tired  
Then I know his day's been weary and  
hard  
And I humor his moods with tender-  
est care,  
I climb on his knee and ruffle his hair.

I rub my cheek 'gainst his stubby  
chin,  
And worry 'cause he looks so worn  
and thin.  
With my hands—I caress his face,  
And try those weary lines to erase.

He looks at me and his tender smile  
Just lights his face, and after awhile  
His arms will tighten, I'll know his  
kiss

As I give my lips in perfect bliss.

Sometimes I grieve when I'm alone,  
That I have no children, have no  
home,

I've given up all that my heart craves  
Because we are convention's slaves.

But I never let him see my tears,  
Nor tell him of my frights and  
fears—

Of all this world he loves me best,  
He comes to me for love and rest.

When he's near and I feel his arms,  
Away with fears, doubts and alarms.  
I rest 'gainst his heart like a tired  
child

And yield to his kisses tender or wild.

But oh, I adore him soul and body,  
And tho' the world calls this same  
love, "shoddy,"

I'd give my life to save him pain,  
I'd die for him, over and over again.

His wife has his name,  
But I have his love;  
And I know, by all the gods above  
That I'm his mate even more than she,  
Now tell me, which would you rather  
be?



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